1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

assured, they build houses which may favourably be compared even with those of the poorer Brahmins. Such well-built houses are of mud walls about two feet thick, a tiled roof laid out on bamboo poles and a fairly large courtyard. We found the houses and courtyards in Barela scrupulously clean. Refuse, however, was thrown into the manure pits right alongside the houses. In Kharara Ghat the houses were not of the same standard of cleanliness as in Barela. There seemed to be no particular direction which the houses must face. Enquiries revealed that there was no particular objection to having the door face toward the south. To some Hindus this is the direction of the dwelling place of the God of Death, *Yama*, and there should be no door that way. Most houses seemed to have no central courtyard, such as is common in Santali villages. If two houses face each other, both houses have a courtyard and there is a common pathway between. The mud walls, inside and outside, the floors and the courtyard are plastered with a mixture of cow dung and clay. There is generally but one room in the average house, and it is littered up with many things. There is found somewhere a large sun-dried mud urn, large enough for a man to get into, and in this is stored the grain so that it may not be destroyed by rats and moisture.[1] There are baskets and tools in the corners; on bamboo poles stretched just across the top of the mud walls, not much higher than the head, hang clothes, rags and tattered bedding. In one corner, the view of which is generally hidden as one enters the low door, is the cooking department with its stone mill and *chulhas* and a few pots for cooking purposes. There will be a few bottles for oil, and a few tins, usually old tins once thrown away by some city dweller, in which are kept such things as salt and spices used in the preparation of the meal. This is a description of the better type of house. In summer it is dark and cool. There are no windows and all the light comes through the door leading to a small veranda.

On the other hand, there is the meaner type of house. At Barela there were numbers of these alongside of other better houses. The pictures show the differences.[2] These ruder huts have no veranda space, though usually there is an attempt at a small courtyard. The doors are so low that one has to get on his hands and knees to enter. The roof is of grass, and usually this type of house does not furnish much protection from rain. The walls are merely bamboo *tati* or just branches woven together and protected by thorns. This type of house is airy compared to the others, but the door can never be locked. In-

1 See Plate vii.
2 See Plate v.

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requirements or by religious observances. They do much to break the monotony and to provide a change.

HOUSEHOLD ARTICLES AND UTENSILS. Beds and cots are seldom, if ever, found in Kol houses. Those who dwell near cities, or work in the industrial centres sometimes own a cheap rope cot called a *khatiya*. The head man of the village may own a cot or two, and when one visits a village, this is often brought for the European guest to sit upon. The usual place for sleep is the mud floor of the dwelling. A blanket or mat may be all that is underneath, while in the hot weather not even this is availed of. Pillows are not used, but if it should be desired that the head be raised, it is probable that a small wooden stool a few inches high will be employed.

352 [369] [622] [574]

KHATIYA

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Fig. 5

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Chairs, tables and the like, are never found. Anything that must be put away and cannot be hung over the rafters or the bamboo poles stretched across the walls is placed in a wooden chest. One usually finds some kind of a small box about the place which is locked. Valuables, however, are usually buried in a hole in the floor and the same completely *lepoed* to hide all trace of the spot.

The main articles in the house are those connected with food and drink. Gourd vessels are occasionally used as receptacles for storing water, but more commonly such vessels are made of earthenware or brass. Kols do not make either of these. The earthen vessels may be purchased cheaply in the bazaar from people of the Kumhar caste—the traditional potters. Food is also stored in them and in one of the Kol sub-divisions, the *Kurkas*, food should only be taken from a particular type of black earthenware dish. As a rule the various kinds of earthenware vessels are being replaced all over village India by those made of brass and aluminium.

415 [323] [325] [439] [251] [178]

The stone implements are the grindstone and the *sil*. The former consists usually of two pieces of round stone, although the bottom stone may be squarish. The upper stone, which is slightly smaller, is about 16" in diameter. It has a peg for a handle by which it is rotated. There is also a hole into which the grain is poured, though often the stone is simply lifted and the grain spread out over

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412 the lower stone. In the centre there is a pivot around which the upper stone rotates. The *sil* is essentially a grindstone but is used mostly to grind spices, and mix together ingredients on the mortar-and-pestle

Fig. 6.

Fig. 7.

system. The *sil* has two parts: an oblong stone 18"×12" the surface of which is roughened by being chipped; the roller, a piece of stone which is rounded and which is used something as a rolling pin, only the stone grinds and does not revolve.

An iron knife which is attached to a piece of wood and on which all the cutting of vegetables is done is usually found about the house. The user sits on the floor and cuts [516] the vegetables or meat on the knife. In the process [252] the knife is steadied by pressing the feet on the wooden attachment and thus both hands are free for work.

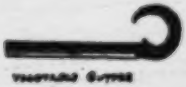

Fig. 8

415 A few baskets will always be found lying about the house. [285] These also are not manufactured by Kols. They are used for transporting things to and from the bazaar, for gathering leaves, sticks and cow-dung for fuel or plaster. Vegetables and the like may be stored in them. The winnowing basket (*supa*) [251] is always found near the granary. This is used [243] to clean the grains and also has its work in certain magical ceremonies which will be described further on. A sort of broom made of bamboo and grass will be found somewhere about the place.

Fig. 9

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354 In one corner of the room is located the *chulha*. This is a low mud hearth with one or two fireplaces. The smoke goes into the room. [252] Here the meals for the family are cooked. Nearby are the cooking [412] vessels and an iron spoon or two for stirring the food and some tongs [415] for the fire. Somewhere will be found the large sun-dried mud urn in [251] which the wheat or rice is stored. This is rat proof and is arranged [237] so that it may be watched for termites which do much damage in [462] villages. Some piles of fuel will be seen: dried cow-dung cakes or bits of wood which have been chopped by the men of the family.

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Kols generally believe that the soul of the child enters and possesses its new body before the child is born. The more general opinion is that the movements of the child in the womb, which first occur about the sixth month, are the signs that the body has received its soul and is already a person. The soul is a gift to the child by Paramatma, and it enters the child's body through the mouth, nose or ears. The Kols' idea of the state and nature of the soul before entering the child's body is very vague and it is unusual to find any clear idea of transmigration and previous existence in another body.

Delivery. There is no uncleanness attached to the woman up to the time of the birth of her baby, but for six days thereafter she is considered unclean. The actual delivery of the child always occurs at home for no use is made of hospitals or the like.

When the time of birth is near the female relatives who have come for the occasion take charge of her. No male members of the family are allowed in the delivery room and men are kept out for the six days following. In a few places however we learned that they might enter after three days. Her mother-in-law and her sister are the ones to make the arrangements and do the actual work, although other female members of the two families may stand ready to assist. The woman awaits her time in a darkened room protected as far as possible from the entry of evil spirits. A few hours before (and sometimes just at the time) birth is expected a mid-wife—*dai*—is summoned. The Kols usually summon a Chamarin, or if she is not available, a Basorin. Sometimes, particularly around Jubbulpore, the Basorin seems to be preferred. If the birth should occur before the *dai* arrives the women in the house can do everything except the cutting of the umbilical cord. In one place we asked what would happen if the *dai* did not arrive and they replied that before a Kolin would cut the cord they would have to let the mother and baby die! Some Kols are said to do it themselves, but we did not find any who admitted that they do so. If the child should be born in a field the mother gathers up the child and the after-birth in her *sari* and carries it home and then the *dai* is called to cut the cord and care for the infant.

The birth usually occurs with the mother squatted on the floor, seated on her heels and bending over a large basket placed upside down on the floor, her head meanwhile resting on her hands. The female relatives support her and give encouragement. The *dai* is the one to receive the child. No one in the family should touch the child until it has first been purified by the *dai*. This applies to the mother as well. The *dai* cuts the umbilical cord with an iron instrument which

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844 [712] she has brought with her and takes charge of the child. The female relatives may move the mother to another part of the room. The first thing to be done to the baby when it is certain that it has begun to breathe, which is learned by the crying of the infant, is to sprinkle [751] it lightly from head to foot with wood ashes. This, it is claimed, prevents skin trouble, a possible chill, and wards off evil spirits. Ashes are also sprinkled about the floor where the mother squatted. The ashes on the child are then removed with a soft cloth and the baby is bathed in luke-warm water. It is then dried and is usually gently massaged with the sweet *til* oil from *Sesamum indicum*. The child [834] should now be given a smoke bath. There has been a fire burning in the lying-in room and into this is sprinkled some *ajwayan* or dill seed (*Anethum graveolens*), which gives a smoke with a pleasant odour. The child is waved through this several times and the smoke and warmth are said to help in removing the moisture from the body and give it protection from evil. Some old pieces of cloth are now ready and in these the child is wrapped by the *dai* who places it on a *supa* (winnowing fan).

The *dai* now turns her attention to the mother who is probably lying on some dirty rags in the corner. The mother is cleaned by the [824] *dai* and is massaged with sweet oil. Usually *karowar*, sometimes called *sarson* oil (mustard oil from *Brassica juncea*), is mixed in with the *til* oil. The *dai* should also clean up and dispose off all the dirty cloths and the placenta. We found some differences as to the method of the disposal of these things. In most places it appears that they 844 are never taken out of the house lest evil spirits work through them, 184 but that they are buried with clarified butter (*ghi*) in a hole in the earthen floor and a fire kept burning over the spot for six days. Sometimes, though rarely, the placenta and soiled cloths are collected in an earthen vessel (or sometimes placed upon a large-sized earthen tile) and are taken outside the house. These things are usually placed somewhere at the back of the house in a place which may not be visited, or are thrown on the manure pile, or sometimes they are buried there. At other times all is burned in the fire which is alight in the lying-in room and the ashes are later thrown into some stream. Again, it was said that it is all wrapped up in a dirty cloth and thrown into a secluded spot. These customs seem to vary, but the first is the most usual.

844 Roy in *The Birhors* says that this group buries the after-birth just 17 outside the door—the deeper it is buried the longer is the interval before the birth of the next child. No animal should be able to get at it and eat it, or the mother will sicken and die. In the case of the umbilical

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roof is formed by bamboo branches covered with banana leaves. 584
Around the upper edge of the *marhwa* is hung a frieze of mango twigs. 349
Mango leaves are always found in connection with Kol weddings; 82f
they do not wither easily and are a symbol of everlastingness and stability. Strips of paper, usually coloured red, are used for decoration. The ground under the *marhwa* is carefully levelled and plastered with [237]
cowdung and in the very centre a hole twelve to eighteen inches deep is dug. This is where the central pole will be placed. Before the pole is lowered into position a *supari* nut (*Areca catechu*), some pieces of *haldi* (usually five) and two-pice coins are placed in the pit, and according to some accounts, rice coloured with *haldi* is also thrown in. The *magrohan* is a piece of wood three to four feet in length and two to four inches in diameter. It should preferably be green wood, though a dry pole is used if a fresh one is not available. It is coloured [386]
red with *sendur* or yellow with *haldi* and has some thread, coloured either white or yellow, wrapped about it seven times from the top to the bottom. Along with the *magrohan* a short green bamboo stick is fixed together with a green *gular* branch and the iron bar used in digging the holes for the booth. If the central post should be of *gular* or other wood a bit of *salai* must be inserted with it. The *salai* is [842]
a symbol of fertility, being an evergreen tree which never withers and takes root easily and quickly; even an apparently dry stick will sprout. After the *magrohan* has been put in place it is reverently 584
circuited by the builders seven times in a clockwise direction and then 349
sendur and cowdung are applied. The sacred pole stands at the [788]
centre of the wedding observances and at that time is surrounded by the articles now to be mentioned. Their position is indicated in figure 21 on the next page.

1. The *magrohan*.
2. A *kalso* (earthenware pot) filled with water. In the water there are mango [415]
leaves which are allowed to protrude at the top and over the top is placed a *dip* or earthenware lamp.
3. A *sil* (grinding stone) on which are placed the following articles noted in [412]
the sub-heads:
   a. A *lorha* (stone roller)—which the bridegroom will use to roll over the pice and disturb their arrangement.
   b. Husked rice, which is sprinkled over the surface of the *sil*.
   c. Seven pice coins which are laid in a row on top of the rice.
   d. Seven bits of wood, each a different kind.
   e. A whole *supari* nut.
   f. *Haldi* water is sprinkled over the whole.
4. A branch of *gular* or palasa (*Butea frondosa*) buried near the magrohan. [824
In a crotch of the same will be inserted a small earthen pot containing *haldi*, 415]
supari nut and two pice.

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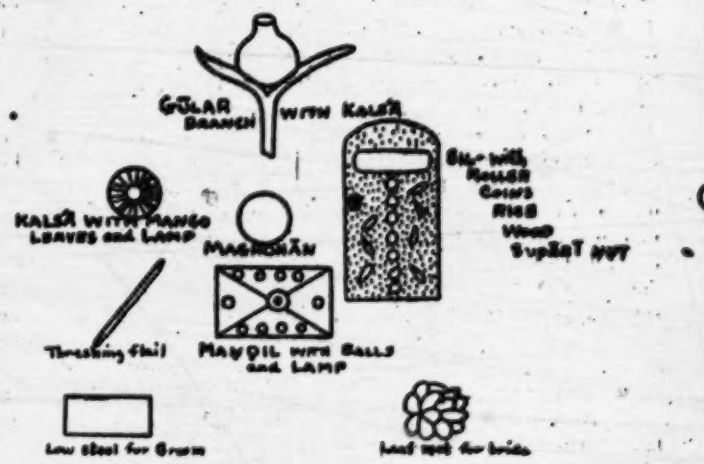

Fig. 21

5. A flat cone of earth (*mandil*) about one foot high and 2 feet in diameter on which are placed around its edge eight to ten small round balls of earth. Over the whole four arches of earth are constructed and in the centre another dip is set.

[352] 6. A *pīra* (low stool) on which the bridegroom will be seated.

[412] 7. A small mat of large leaves on which the bride will sit.

8. A *musar* (threshing flail).

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778 411 [785 787] are very common. The trident with the sharp point is used at the time the *panda* or another is possessed of Khermai, and is pierced through the tongue or cheek.

3. *Spiked Sandals* (*Kharau*). Every well-equipped shrine should 778 787 have at least one pair of spiked sandals. These are made of pieces of wood in the shape of the sole of a shoe with sharp spikes driven through so that the person walking on them stands on the points. There is a 292 wooden peg toward the front of each which fits between the big toe and the next and holds the sandal on the foot. These are generally used at the time of the trance. When the spirit of Kalimai possesses a man, it will be evidenced by his desire to put on these sandals and jump about in them.

778 785 787 [412] 4. *Iron Tongs* (*Chimta*). There is also another kind of iron instrument found in these shrines: iron tongs used for taking coals out of the fire. When Sannyasi *dso* comes upon a man he will take the tongs and beat himself with them. Hindu ascetics usually carry tongs.

5. *Iron Lash* (*Gurda*). This is a sort of magic chain made of iron links barbed with bits of steel. The handle by which it is grasped is also iron. During the *bawa*, if one is possessed (particularly by Bhuiyan *deo*), he will pick up this chain and lash himself till the blood comes. If some person, possessed of an evil spirit, is brought before the shrine, and the *panda* in his trance recognizes the reality of the spirit possession, he will attempt to cast out the spirit by lashing the unfortunate man.

6. *Iron Nails*. Some bits of iron or iron nails are usually found somewhere about the shrine. These serve a dual purpose: they are tests for Khermai, and one possessed of her can stick them into his flesh without pain or discomfort. They are also used to frighten away evil spirits who may make a disturbance, and are sometimes flung in their direction causing them to fly away.

7. *A Bed of Spikes* (*Palna*). Often a bed of spikes is found in connection with these shrines. This too is to test spirit possession. 778 One possessed of Kali will seek to use the bed of spikes.

[777 237] 8. *A Ram's Horn* is sometimes found. It is lucky to have one and it protects the shrine.

[354] 9. *Clay Lamps* (*Dip*). Clay dishes into which oil is poured and wicks attached are also found at all shrines. Sweet oil and incense are mixed, and during the time of worship two or three of these are lighted and kept burning. The *panda* lights and cares for them.

[789] 10. *Ashes* (*Rakha*). A pile of ashes is always found somewhere about the shrine. This is a good protective device against evil spirits.